

TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

November 2015

The Transportation Newsletter is designed to keep individuals and agencies updated on some of the public and private transportation issues in the Memphis and Shelby County area.

Fixed Route System: MATA's fixed route system consists of MATA bus and trolley service that operates on set routes, dates and scheduled times within the MATA service area. Buses are caught at a bus stop or terminal.

All fixed route buses are ramp equipped for mobility device users. People with disabilities and seniors with a proper ID card pay half fare anytime of day. Any trolley rider (ambulatory or mobility device user) that has problems boarding should request use of the lift from the operator and be permitted to do so.

MATApplus Paratransit Service: MATApplus is a curb-to-curb, shared ride form of public transportation that is comparable to the fixed route system under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). MATApplus provides service for all types of trips within their service area. **Riders must have a disability that prevents them from riding the MATA fixed route bus system and the disability must be verified by a professional familiar with the disability.**

There is no charge for assistance with a MATApplus application or photos.

.ADA EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Paratransit is stated as comparable transportation service required by the ADA for people with disabilities **who are unable to use the fixed-route bus system.** [37.3]

The ADA regulations include a requirement to strictly enforce paratransit eligibility that is to be determined in a functional, non-medical model. Not everyone with a disability qualifies for paratransit (MATApplus) under the ADA.

Under the Origin-To-Destination Rule, MATApplus operators are required to assist customers to and from the bus from the door way of pickup / dropoff **Operators are not required to go inside any location to let a customer know the bus has arrived. Customers should be ready and waiting at their scheduled pickup time.**

There are times when MATApplus riders are being denied rides. When this happens, no matter the reason, it is an ADA violation.

Fixed route buses with no audible announcements, as many are is an ADA violation and considered inaccessible. If announcements are announced only at time points as stated by Alvin Pearson, they are not in accordance with ADA which states:

"On fixed-route systems, the ADA requires that operators announce stops at least at transfer points with other fixed-routes, other major intersections and destination points, and at intervals along a route to allow customers with visual disabilities to be oriented to their location."

INFORMATION

MATApplus operators have been told to pick up & drop off customers on Madison and not the parking lot at the Memphis Center for Independent Living. Any bus that picks up or drop off riders on the parking lot, rain or shine, is in violation of MATA rules.

NEW MATAPLUS BUSES

MATA is discussing ordering 10 MATApplus vehicles with lifts, that are not accessible to all and without comments from riders that was stated would happen by Sandy Stanko, the MATApplus Director. These 12-passenger, 24 foot vehicles have steps at the front of the bus that makes boarding by many riders with mobility devices such as walkers and canes difficult, if not impossible. These riders are allowed to use the lift under the ADA, although they may not know this and won't ask to do so because some of the drivers have told riders they can't use the ramp on the current buses when they ask.

If riders cannot board buses on their own and/or with service dogs, without the animal being handled by the driver, they are not accessible. MATA is purchasing vehicles like they did with the minivans without regard to the accessibility for the riders, yet they do not any of the buses.

FIXED-ROUTE BUS SERVICE CHANGES START DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2015

The Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) Board approved fixed route bus changes beginning December 13th. There are no changes to MATApplus service or fares.

MATA is calling the changes minor but they do not ride the buses and for many of the riders the changes in times are major and will cause missed transfers and longer times to their destinations.

MATA says schedules are now and will be posted the website and are available by email. They have also stated that actual schedules will be available 2 weeks prior to schedule changes.

MATA says if a bus comes consistently on the hour, it works better for customers and drivers. Customers say if a bus comes consistently anytime, it is a miracle.

Memphis Transportation Advisory Committee (MTAC)

MTAC is one of seven Standing Committees of the Memphis Advisory Council for Citizens with Disabilities (MACCD)

Meetings are held at 10:30 a.m. bi-monthly on the second Friday at the Trolley Barn located at 547 N Main. The meetings are free and open to the public. The next meeting will be Friday, December 11, 2015. For more information, contact Betty Anderson, Committee Chair at (901) 274-2247 or email bpetbet@aol.com.
